

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the research problem, the objective of the study, the theoretical framework, the significances of the study, the definition of key-terms, and also the limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is an international language that is used in global communication across countries. The role of English as an international language is expanding to the countries that use English as their foreign language such as Indonesia and Thailand (Kachru, 2009). As such, it is really important for people to learn and master English.

English is used more commonly in big cities in Indonesia such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bali. There are many multinational companies base in big cities like Jakarta and Surabaya; therefore, English is more commonly used in the society in big cities. Whereas in Bali where many foreigners come and have their holiday, many local people may have more English exposure. Most people in Bali, even though they only speak limited English words, they may be able to communicate in English.

The important use of English in global communication has made the Government of Indonesia consider the importance of its people to communicate in English. Therefore, English is put into the curriculum of the secondary schools, junior and senior high schools. As people realize the need and the importance of English, a big number

of schools in big cities provide English lessons, even starting from playgroup. Schools have high standards to provide English classes to their students. Hence, the need for good English teachers is really high.

It is said in *Buku Pedoman* of the Widya Mandala Catholic University English Department (WMCU ED) that the English Department aims at producing qualified English teachers who have good English proficiency (*Buku Pedoman* Widya Mandala Catholic University, 2015). The fact is that students who learn at the English Department come from different school backgrounds and various areas in Indonesia. As such, they have different levels of English proficiency when they study in their first semester.

As most of the subjects are delivered in English, the curriculum at WMCU ED is designed to equip the students with English skills and components in the first semester. Students must have enough English proficiency to be able to join the higher semester courses as most of the courses are delivered in English.

Actually, the subjects in the first semester are presented to comply with the above purpose, especially intensive course (IC). IC is a 12-credit course and aims to equip the students with English skills (listening, writing, reading, and speaking) and components (grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary). To comply with the above requirements, IC that is placed in the first semester intends to prepare the students with good English proficiency.

The department is concerned about the success of the IC program as it is a very important course for the students to be able to join classes in higher semesters in English. However, the data of the students' academic achievement at the end of semester one of batch 2017/2018 shows that 30% of the students were not able to meet the expectation, their GPA is under 3.0 and according to the department, these students would have difficulty using English in classes. To help these students to prepare them to join classes in English in the higher semester, the department has a new program for those students, a language clinic. Maharaj (2016) says that "English language clinic is a program in an academic institution where an English language expert or teacher offers a remedial lesson to a student or a small group of students". At the WMCU ED, the language clinic is named Study Group. And it is conducted by all the laboratories in the English Department. For this study, the writer is focusing on the study group conducted by the SAC laboratory. Students come to SAC as scheduled before and are given a material each meeting and they learn with the guidance of the counsellors. This program was first launched in semester two of 2018. Students who are assigned to attend this program are those who have less than 3.0 GPA and from the lecturers' recommendation.

Based on the above explanation, this study is conducted to find out the students' perceptions of the study group program which was a new program in the year of 2018

This study focuses on the students' perceptions of the study group program. According to Bem (1972) perception is when individuals come to "know" their own

attitudes, emotions, and other internal states partially by inferring them from observations of their own overt behaviour and/or the circumstances in which this behaviour occurs. The writer also touches upon the motivation of the students and students' relationship with the tutors and other members of the study group. Hence, the writer also interviewed the tutors to support the data analysis. One's motivation can be influenced by their perceptions on a particular object or task and vice versa (Calder and Staw, 1975). Calder and Staw (1975) also mention where the extrinsic motivation is introduced, it may lead someone's perceptions doing the activity only to obtain the extrinsic reward. Based on Black and Weiss (1992) research, students who were given praises, encouragement and appreciation by the teachers tend to be more motivated and have good relationship with the teachers, therefore their perceptions on doing the task are positive. The writer would like to know whether students' perceptions of the study group are influenced by their motivation and relationship with the tutors and other members of the group.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the above problem, this study was conducted to analyse students' perceptions of Study Group conducted by the SAC. Therefore the problem statement is: What are the English Department students' perceptions of the SAC Study Group?

This study is concerned about the students' perceptions in general and the perceptions of the students in the learning process. Therefore, the problem statement is sub-divided into the following sub-problem statements:

- a) What are the English Department students' general perceptions of the SAC Study Group?
- b) What are the English Department students' perceptions of the learning process?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Derived from the above problem statement the objective of the study is

- a) To find out the English Department students' general perceptions of Study Group.
- b) To find out the English Department students' perceptions of the learning process.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is to find out students' perceptions of the new program set up by the department called the study group. Perceptions can be one of many ways to evaluate something through someone who has experienced that something. Perception is direct awareness of external reality, and it leads to non-inferential knowledge of that reality (Huemer, 2001). The person has to be aware of what they are doing before they can give perceptions about it. Knowing one's perceptions of something is really great and helpful as the person is aware of it and gives their thought on it. Positive perceptions of something indicate that something is good, effective, or the person likes it.

This new program which was designed on the English Language Clinic concept where “sickness” is their lack of English skills and hoping that the Language Clinic can cure the “sickness” (Finch,2002). The program is compulsory for the students who are already chosen by the department based on their first semester’s GPAs. But their motivation in attending this program is also interesting to look at. Whether they have a willingness to move forward to achieve something (Solomon, 2004) or other motivations such as obligation to attend because it was compulsory.

1.5 Definition of Key-terms

Perception

Perception is one's primary form of cognitive contact with the world around him and all conceptual knowledge is based upon or derived from this primary form of awareness (Efron R, 1969).

Language Clinic

According to Sangeetha (2015), the language clinic provides an opportunity for the students to improve their listening, writing, reading and writing skills in English by giving them one-on-one lessons or small group lessons which create a personalised learning experience.

IC Study Group

According to the IC coordinator, the concept of study group in WMCU English Department is similar to language clinic but to avoid demotivating the students and with some recommendations from the students; it was later changed into Study Group. Study group in English Department has 4 lessons a week for each basic English skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking). There are counsellors from each laboratory to guide the study and the discussion every week.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

This study aims at knowing the effectiveness of a new program: Study Group conducted by the English Department. As it was a new program study program in academic year 2018. It is important to know the effectiveness of it. The result of the study is expected to give insights especially to the English Department whether or not the program can be conducted in the future. The result of the study is also expected to give initial inputs for improving the program.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study covers students' perceptions conducted at the SAC. The participants were 16 from batch 2017/2018 joining the program. They were assigned by the English Department to join the program. Three SAC tutors handled the program, and they were also interviewed in order to support the data analysis. This study also analyses students' motivation and their relationship with their peers in the group. This was done based on

the concept that one's perceptions is generally is influenced by their motivation and relationship (Calder, Staw, 1991).

This study on students' perceptions can be used to give initial inputs for the improvement of the program. This study does not involve the measurement of the students' prior knowledge and their achievement after joining the program.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction which includes the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, the definition of the key terms, and the organization of the study. The second chapter focuses on the review of related literature which consists of the related theories and previous studies. The third chapter explains about the research design, population and sample, instruments, the procedure of data collection, and the technique of data analysis that the writer used. The fourth chapter contains of findings and discussion. The last which is the fifth chapter serves the conclusion and suggestions of the study